PONTIFICAL DIPLOMACY. THE HOLY SEE AND THE COMUNIST COUNTRIES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE*

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Riassunto: Il lavoro presente intende trattare il tema del rapporto tra la diplomazia pontificia e il comunismo. Si possono riportare vari argomenti per dimostrare l'influenza della Santa Sede per far crollare i sistemi totalitari nell'Est Europa. Da evidenziare soprattutto il contributo di Giovanni Paolo II, buon conoscitore dell'ideologia comunista, difensore della libertà e grande protettore dei diritti della persona umana.

Parole chiave: diplomazia pontificale, comunismo, Santa Sede, Est Europa.

The Roman-Catholic Church is the only religious institution[1] that can enter into diplomatic relations and that interests itself in international law, acting through the Holy See, an international sovereign subject of singular characteristics. In other words, the subject who interacts with other actors[2] of international life is the Holy See[3], not the Catholic Church as a community of believers and neither[4] the Vatican City State.

The Holy See is the Holy Father himself inasmuch as he is an independent, universal, spiritual authority, together with the organizations of the Roman Curia that collaborate with his mission. The Holy See thus requires the existence of a genuine public international *status*, such as given by the definition of subject *sui iuris*[5], meaning the Holy See defines for itself its juridical organization and does not receive it from outside, and as such,

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[1] Marta Lago, *Acțiunea internațională a Sfântului Scaun*, translated by Fr. Mihai Pătraşcu, available at http://www.ercis.ro.

[2] Cf. *Sfântul Scaun*, available at http://www.mae.ro.

[3] Carlo Fabris, "Presenza della diplomazia pontificia", *Rivista di studi politici internazionali*, new series, year 73, no. 289, Rome 2006, 71.

[4] Winfried Schulz, "Lo Stato della Città del Vaticano e la Santa Sede", *Apollinaris*, year 51, Rome 1978, 672.

[5] Marta Lago, *Acțiunea internațională a Sfântului Scaun*.

can enter into relationship with other states, which results in the diplomatic relations with a significant number of states.

Therefore, the Holy See is a recognized entity[6] in international relations[7], with spiritual and universal authority, sovereign subject of international law[8], of religious and moral character[9].

The Holy See (as a subject of international law) has the right to external representation; it has diplomatic representatives in different countries of the world, just as the Holy See hosts diplomatic missions of other countries[10].

The whole pontifical diplomatic corps accredited as such, is entitled to diplomatic immunity[11], and enjoys all privileges and freedoms ensured by the international law in force. Moreover, by tradition, the *Apostolic Nuncio* is the Dean[12] of the accredited diplomatic corps.

Ever since the beginning of tis existence[13], the Holy See has frequently participated[14] in councils, conferences, congresses (international meetings, in general), its diplomats being present both as observers and as participants[15], at the same level with the other secular states.

Studies[16] on the diplomatic relations of the Holy See indicate that it began to intensify its presence within International Bodies at the end of

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[6] Cf. *Sfântul Scaun*, available at http://www.mae.ro.

[7] Joseph JOBLIN, "Il ruolo internazionale della Santa Sede", *La Civiltà Cattolica*, year 151, tome III, Rome 2000, 160.

[8] Ombretta FUMAGALLI CARULLI, *Il governo universale della Chiesa e i diritti della persona*, with five excellent lessons by: Giovanni Battista Re, Crescenzio Sepe, Mario Francesco Pompedda, Jean-Louis Tauran, Julián Herranz, Milan, Vita e Pensiero Editrice, 2003, 275.

[9] Carlo FABRIS, "Presenza della diplomazia pontificia", 82.

[10] Cf. *Storia della Chiesa*, directed by Hubert JEDIN, X/1, *La Chiesa nel ventesimo secolo (1914-1975)*, Jaca Book Edizioni, Rome 1975, 20-21.

[11] Giuseppe DALLA TORRE, *La città sul monte – Contributo ad una teoria canonistica sulle relazioni tra Chiesa e comunità politica*, AVE, Rome 1996, 132; Lorenzo SPINELLI, *Il diritto pubblico ecclesiastico dopo il Concilio Vaticano II*, Giuffrè Editore, Milan 1985, 142.

[12] See: "Misiunea nunțiului apostolic", in the *„Presa Bună" Almanack*, Iaşi 2002, 63; Carlo FABRIS, "Presenza della diplomazia pontificia", 70.

[13] Anna CARLETTI, "Il contributo della diplomazia pontificia alla costruzione di una nuova società internazionale", article during the seminary: *L'agire agapico come categoria interpretativa per le scienze sociali*, Mariapoli Centre of Castelgandolfo, Rome, January 17-18, 2011, available http://www.social-one.org.

[14] Anna CARLETTI, "Il contributo della diplomazia pontificia...".

[15] Ombretta FUMAGALLI CARULLI, *Il governo universale della Chiesa e i diritti della persona*; Jean-Louis TAURAN, "La presenza della Santa Sede negli organismi internationali", in Ombretta Fumagalli CARULLI, *Il governo universale della Chiesa e i diritti della persona*, 367-376.

[16] See, among others: Paolo BREZZI, *La diplomazia pontificia*, Institute for International Political Studies, Milan 1942; Giuseppe DE MARCHI, *Le nunziature apostoliche dal 1800 al 1956*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Rome 1957; Igino CARDINALE, *Le Saint-Siège et la diplomatie*, Paris – Tournai – Rome – New York 1962; Pierre BLET, *Histoire de la représentation diplomatique du Saint Siège des origines à l'aube du XIX^{ème} siècle*, Vatican City, Vatican

the Second World War, during which these bodies were faced with a significant increase both in terms of number and the importance of their mission[17].

The diplomatic activity of the Holy See over time has given rise to various external comments, some favourable, others rather superficial. However, both reviews classified the activities of the Holy See in the field of international law[18].

Points of view coming from inside were also expressed by some Catholic organizations, which supported the need for a Catholic Church as an institution only "spiritual"[19], with no connection with the secular world, as well as, and which is particularly important, the imperious need to condemn the authoritarian regimes and injustices faced by the people and existing communities around the world.

Much has been said related to the fact that "the purpose of the Church is not political or social, but religious"[20] and spiritual[21]. At the same time, however, another aspect was also emphasized, namely that the Roman-Catholic ecclesiastical institution "addresses people living in a particular context"[22] and who need guidance based on the religious truth, which can only be achieved by the Church[23]. Therefore, there you have it, in the end; it is this that generates the purpose of the international[24] activity of the Holy See, in other words of its diplomacy, meant to solve the various problems of humanity.

Furthermore, at the international level, the Holy See takes part[25] in practical actions regarding the various problems faced by the peoples of the world, sharing and supporting their legitimate interests, contributing

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Archives, 1982; Giovanni BARBERINI, *Chiesa e Santa Sede nell'ordinamento internazionale. Esame delle norme canoniche*, Giappichelli Editore, Turin 1996; Michael F. FELDKAMP, *La diplomazia pontificia. Da Silvestro I a Giovanni Paolo II. Un profilo*, Editoriale Jaca Book, Milan 1998; Şerban TURCUŞ, *Sfântul Scaun în relațiile internaționale. Între societatea perfectă şi poporul lui Dumnezeu*, România Press, Bucharest 2008.

[17] Antonio MESSINEO, "La comunità mondiale", *La Civiltà Cattolica*, year 114, tome V, Rome 1963, 313.

[18] Giovanni CAPRILE, "Ispirazione e scopi della diplomazia pontificia", *La Civiltà Cattolica*, year 125, tome I, Rome 1974, 271-273.

[19] Simion BELEA, "Rolul Sfântului Scaun în Comunitatea Internațională", *Caietele Institutului Catolic*, year IX, no. 1, Bucharest 2010, 230; Carlo FABRIS, "Presenza della diplomazia pontificia", 82.

[20] Simion BELEA, "Rolul Sfântului Scaun în Comunitatea Internațională", 231.

[21] Carlo FABRIS, "Presenza della diplomazia pontificia", 82.

[22] Simion BELEA, "Rolul Sfântului Scaun în Comunitatea Internațională", 231.

[23] Joseph JOBLIN, "La presenza della Chiesa sul piano internazionale", *La Civiltà Cattolica*, year 126, tome IV, Rome 1975, 13-28.

[24] Idem, *loc. cit.*, 2000, p. 158-162.

[25] Carlo FABRIS, "La diplomazia pontifícia come presenza della Santa Sede nella vita delle chiese locali, presso la comunità nazionale e internazionale", *Angelicum*, tome 83, no. 1, Rome 2006, 177-209.

in a practical way to overcome existing difficulties at a given time, launching initiatives in the most diverse areas (education, culture, healthcare and humanitarian assistance in general), thus contributing to the promotion of human values and of peace[26].

In the process of establishing the post-war world, the imposition and subsequently the intensification of the Soviet hegemony over Central and Eastern Europe represented a significant phenomenon[27]. Under the protective umbrella of the Red Army, a systematic substantial change of the political-economic system of the countries in the region was performed, in accordance with the Soviet communist totalitarian[28] model, emerging in a number of communist regimes, obedient to Moscow. Thus, between 1945-1948, the Soviet Union[29] included in its sphere of influence most of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe, as communist regimes were being imposed in Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Albania, Czechoslovakia and East Germany.

In a very short time horizon, using strategies appropriate for the concrete realities of each country in the region and, at the same time, taking advantage of the deep crisis caused by the World War II, the Soviets will impose[30] their own political and ideological system. However, the survival of the new political power, as the communism theorists conceived it, was not possible if not through a *top-down*[31] reconstruction of the whole society, which meant that the new regime would enter into conflict with the structures and institutions that ensured its own democratic and dynamic existence[32].

The religious policies promoted by the so-called "people's democracy"[33] regimes in Central and Eastern European countries[34] were modelled according

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[26] Giovanni CAPRILE, "La diplomazia pontificia a servizio della pace", *La Civiltà Cattolica*, anno 123, tome I, Roma 1972, 263-266.

[27] Ioan Marius BUCUR, "Relațiile României cu Sf. Scaun la începutul Războiului Rece", *Studia Theologica*, tome V, no. 1, Cluj-Napoca 2007, 1, available at http://www.studiatheologica.cnet.ro.

[28] Violeta BARBU, "Memoria totalitarismului dintr-o perspectivă catolică. O dezbatere istorică", *Dialog Teologic*, no. 25, Iaşi 2010, 52.

[29] André GLUCKSMANN, *Bucătăreasa şi mâncătorul de oameni. Eseu despre raporturile dintre stat, marxism şi lagărele de concentrare*, Humanitas, Bucharest 1991, 32.

[30] Ioan Marius BUCUR, "Relațiile României cu Sf. Scaun la începutul Războiului Rece", 1.

[31] Ioan Marius BUCUR, "Relațiile României cu Sf. Scaun la începutul Războiului Rece", 1.

[32] Zbigniew BRZEZINSKI, *Marele eşec. Naşterea şi moartea comunismului în secolul douăzeci*, Dacia, Cluj-Napoca 1993, 21-26.

[33] Ioan Marius BUCUR, "Relațiile României cu Sf. Scaun la începutul Războiului Rece", 2.

[34] The Holy Father, "«*I come before you as a witness to human dignity*», Pope John Paul II's address of October 5, 1995 at the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations Organization", in the *„Presa Bună" Almanack*, Iaşi 1996, 28.

to a complex set of determinants, of which we mention the ethno-confessional configuration, relations between ethnic and confessional majorities and minorities, cultural horizon of that society, the attitude of churches during the war etc.

Moreover, the always more obvious deterioration of relations between the USA and the USSR resulted in an increased Soviet hegemony in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the already very limited space for diplomatic dialogue will be annihilated by the new political exigencies imposed on the states by the *people's democracy* following the Conference in Szklárska Póreba[35] from 22 to 27 September 1947. Here, "delegations of nine European communist parties, seven of which are in power (USSR, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia) and two are strongest in Western Europe (France and Italy), found the *Cominform*[36], a centralized body[37] designed to ensure a better coordination of the actions of the founding communist parties (of the "anti-imperialist and democratic camp"[38] – under the guidance of the Soviet Union) facing the actions of the "imperialist and antidemocratic camp"[39] – under the umbrella of the United States of America.

Born during the Cold War, the *Cominform* is clearly a response[40] to the *Truman Doctrine*[41] (March 1947) and the *Marshall Plan*[42] (June 1947), aimed at directing[43] the communist parties around the world. Therefore, fidelity to the USSR and the Soviet political system becomes the touchstone for all the leaders of the "people's democracy" regimes in Central and Eastern Europe[44], and the Catholic Church is considered, both in its political discourse[45] and practical action, "a serious obstacle for the expansion of the Soviet influence in Central and South-East Europe"[46]. For example, on

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[35] Ioan Marius BUCUR, "Relațiile României cu Sf. Scaun la începutul Războiului Rece", 9.

[36] Jean NOUZILLE, *Catolicii din Moldova. Istoria unei minorități confesionale din România*, Sapienția, Iaşi 2010, 272.

[37] The name *Cominform* is in fact an abbreviation of the Russian name: „Информационное бюро коммунистических и рабочих партий" meaning the "Communist Information Bureau".

[38] Lilly MARCOU, *Le Kominform. Le communisme de guerre froide*, Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris 1977, 330

[39] Lilly MARCOU, *Le Kominform. Le communisme de guerre froide*, 330.

[40] Jean NOUZILLE, *Catolicii din Moldova*, 272.

[41] Henry KISSINGER, *Diplomația*, BIC ALL, Bucharest 1998, 397.

[42] Zbigniew BRZEZINSKI, *Marele eşec...*, 244-245.

[43] Jean NOUZILLE, *Catolicii din Moldova*, 272.

[44] Geoffrey SWAIN – Nigel SWAIN, *Eastern Europe Since 1945*, Macmillan, Basingstoke 1993, 56.

[45] Şerban TURCUŞ, "Le Saint-Siège dans le discours politique roumain (1947-1953). Considérations", *Transylvanian Review*, tome VI, no. 1, Cluj-Napoca 1997, 135-147.

[46] Jean NOUZILLE, *Catolicii din Moldova*, 273.

February 22, 1948, one of the Romanian communist leaders – Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, secretary of the Romanian Communist Party at the time, unequivocally stated, "the Catholic Church is the only organized obstacle that still prevents the final establishment of the popular democracy system in Romania"[47].

The conference in Szklárska Póreba and the foundation of the Cominform are considered, "by certain Catholic groups, as a logical consequence of the Soviet policy, which hopes to create the United States of Europe and to form a compact camp of the East with Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia"[48].

For the Holy See, the experience of the previous relations with Soviet Russia, called for caution and reserve. Therefore, refusing improvised initiatives, the Holy See has not chosen the confrontation path, as it would not assume any responsibility for breaking diplomatic relations with the new governments imposed by the Soviets[49] in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

On the other side, however, the presence of diplomats with the rank of ambassador at the head of the Holy See diplomatic offices in countries in Central and Eastern Europe had a symbolic value, but also a practical one that the new communist leaders will not want to accept anymore.

In the context of the intensification of the "Cold War"[50], the communist regimes[51] have decided the unilateral interruption of diplomatic relations[52] with the Holy See and thus the expulsion of its diplomatic representatives, in a discourteous manner, without respecting diplomatic customs and violating the most elementary rules of international law.

During the period following the Second World War, the Catholic Church faced serious and new problems[53]. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe were controlled by the communist regimes, which led to expulsions, threats, and restriction of individual freedoms etc., which are specifics of totalitarian regimes[54].

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[47] Daniel Barbu, "Ultimul obstacol", *Verbum*, year II, no. 1-6 (January-June), Bucharest 1991, 34.

[48] Jean Nouzille, *Catolicii din Moldova*, 273.

[49] Andrea Riccardi, *Il Vaticano e* Mosca, Laterza, Roma – Bari 1993, 95.

[50] Ioan Marius Bucur, "Relațiile României cu Sf. Scaun la începutul Războiului Rece", 12.

[51] See: "Sfinții şi martirii, adevărată forță a Bisericii. Martirii secolului XX – comemorare ecumenică", *„Presa Bună" Almanack*, Iaşi 2001, 52.

[52] Cf. *România-Vatican. Relații diplomatice*, tome I (1920-1950), Editura Enciclopedică, Bucharest 2003, 334.

[53] Pierre Pierrard, *Histoire de L'Église Catholique*, Desclée, Paris 1991, 285.

[54] Raymond Aron, *Democrație şi totalitarism*, All Educational, Bucharest 2001, 212-213.

During his speech on March 5, 1946 in Fulton city, American state of Missouri, in the presence of American President Harry Truman, Winston Churchill (invited to Westminster College to receive the Doctor Honoris Causa title) said a phrase that became famous: "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent"[55]. In this speech, the British prime minister draws the world's attention on the imminent danger[56] posed by Soviet Russia and world communism[57].

During those difficult times for the Catholic Church, Pope Pius XII[58] urged the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to establish the so-called "Churches of silence"[59] in opposition to the so-called "national Catholic Churches"[60] (created by the communist regimes and implicitly disavowed by the Holy See). For the Catholics and their shepherds, under the communist regime, the *silence* was no dream and no fear either, but a "heroic vigil"[61].

During the *Cold War*[62], the Vatican diplomacy and Pope Pius XII[63] intervened to ensure peace and observation of the rights of people and nations. Stalin himself had answered the wish of Pope Pius XII, for the Holy See to participate in peace talks (after the Second World War), with the famous rhetorical question, "The Pope? How many divisions has he got? "[64] Later on, in 1953, upon Stalin's[65] death, Pope Pius XII said in his own turn: "Now he will see how many divisions we have got"[66].

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[55] Alexandr Jakovlev, *Ce vrem să facem din Uniunea Sovietică*, Humanitas, Bucharest 1991, 126.

[56] Henry Kissinger, *Diplomația*, 388.

[57] Cf. „New York Times", March 6, 1946.

[58] Pope Pius XII launched the idea of a "Church of silence" in his Christmas message of 1951; Jean Chélini, *Histoire de l'église du Christ. L'Église sous Pie XII*, tome 2, L'après-guerre (1945-1958), Fayard, Paris 1989, 446.

[59] Pierre Pierrard, *Histoire de L'Église Catholique*, 285; Jean Chélini, *Histoire de l'église du Christ. L'Église sous Pie XII*, 446.

[60] Dănuț Doboș – Sebastian Doboș, "Biserica Romano-Catolică din România în anii regimului comunist (1948-1989)", *Buletin Istoric*, no. 9 (journal of the Department of historical research of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Iaşi), Presa Bună, Iaşi 2008, 184-185.

[61] Želimir Puljić, "Alois Card. Stepinac – un erou exemplar din rândul mulților păstori eroi", *Dialog Teologic*, no. 24, Iaşi 2009, 42.

[62] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Europa Centrală şi de Est în Ciclonul Tranziției*, Diogene, Bucharest 1995, 209.

[63] Francesco Gligora – Biagia Catanzaro, *Breve storia dei papi da S. Pietro a Giovanni Paolo II*, Panda Edizioni, Padova 1979, 256.

[64] Emil Diac, *Papa Pius al XII-lea, apărător al drepturilor omului. Teză de doctorat* (scientific coordinator, Professor Isidor Mărtincă, PhD), University of Bucharest, Faculty of Roman-Catholic Theology, 2012, 10.

[65] Roy Medvedev, *Despre Stalin şi stalinism. Consemnări istorice*, Humanitas, Bucharest 1991, 349.

[66] Emil Diac, *Papa Pius al XII-lea, apărător al drepturilor omului*.

Understanding the difficulties faced by the United Nations, Pope Pius XII[67] (1939-1958) encouraged the constructive initiatives in post-war international relations, promoting and supporting (through diplomatic means[68]) the conclusion of fair treaties.

Moscow, on the other hand, did not issue publicly a centralized plan for abolishing Catholic Church in the countries occupied by the Red Army, but urged communist "national" leaders to "take care of the problem" as soon as possible.

The methods "chosen"[69] by the promoters of so-called "popular democracies"[70] in their fight against the Catholic Church[71] are strikingly similar (in varying proportions, of course) in all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe: breaking the ties with the Holy See by closing the Apostolic Nunciatures (as diplomatic representatives of the Holy See); the persecution and arresting of bishops, priests and members of religious congregations; the suppression and censorship of Catholic publications; the suspension of religious education and the nationalization of the Catholic denominational schools; the abolition of the Catholic orders and congregations etc.

Behind the "Iron Curtain"[72], at the instigation of Moscow, all the forces of communist repression[73] will set in motion to liquidate the Roman-Catholic Church and squash the spiritual manifestations in the countries under Soviet influence.

In these conditions, characterized by the worsening of the situation of the Catholic Church in the countries within the sphere of influence of the USSR, the main concern of the Holy See was the opposition to the communist regime that had engulfed the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The reaction of Pope Pius XII became increasingly obvious, effective and official.

On July 1, 1949, the Catholic Church (through the Holy Office) delimited itself from the communist ideology. The official statement stated that those Christians who confess, defend and propagate the Communist doctrine put

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[67] August FRANZEN – Remigius BÄUMER, *Istoria papilor*, Editura Arhiepiscopiei Romano-Catolice, Bucharest 1996, 421-430.

[68] Jean CHÉLINI, *Histoire de l'église du Christ. L'Église sous Pie XII*, 395.

[69] Wilhelm DANCĂ, *"«Nu sunt de acord». Biserica şi Statul la Mons. Anton Durcovici"*, *Dialog Teologic*, no. 26, Iaşi 2010, 74.

[70] Guy HERMET, *Istoria naţiunilor şi a naţionalismului în Europa*, Institutul European, Iaşi 1997, 247.

[71] Aristide BRUNELLO, *La Chiesa del silenzio. Fatti e documenti sulla persecuzione contro la Chiesa cattolica nei paesi communisti dell'Est-Europa*, Paoline, Ostia (Rome) 1953, 326.

[72] Jean CHÉLINI, *Histoire de l'église du Christ. L'Église sous Pie XII*, 445.

[73] Dănuţ DOBOŞ, "Justiţia politică şi «vinovăţia» de a fi catolic în anii regimului comunist", *Dialog Teologic*, no. 25, Iaşi 2010, 43.

themselves *ipso facto* in the situation of excommunicated people, because they become apostates adhering to a materialist and anti-Christian philosophy.

In a speech to the Catholic Action in Rome on February 20, 1949, offering a panoramic view of the persecutions, Pope Pius XII was outraged by the fact that

> a Government hostile to religion has struck this time at a Prince of the Church [referring to the arrest, trial, imprisonment and house arrest of the Hungarian Cardinal Mindszenty n. n.], venerated by the vast majority of his people, is no isolated case; it is one of the links in the long chain of persecutions which certain dictatorial States are carrying out against Christian life and doctrine [...]. Can [the Pope] then be silent, when in a certain country men tear with violence or fraud from the centre of Christianity, from Rome, the Churches united to her, imprison all the Greek Catholic Bishops because they refuse to apostatize from their faith, persecute and arrest priests and faithful because they refuse to leave their true Mother Church? Can the Pope be silent when a minority regime removes from parents the right to educate their own children, in order to draw those children away from Christ? Can the Pope be silent, when a State, exceeding the limits of its competence, arrogates to itself the power to supress dioceses, to depose Bishops, to upset the organization of the Church, and to reduce it below the minimum requirements for the effective cure souls?[74].

And things were to worsen increasingly more. In 1949, the space to manoeuvre of the Catholic episcopates in the countries of Eastern Europe was very little. In Hungary, Cardinal Mindszenty[75] was in prison since December 1948; in Croatia, the Archbishop of Zagreb, Alojzije Stepinac[76], was in prison[77] since May 17, 1945[78]; in Czechoslovakia, the archbishop of Prague, Josef Beran[79], was under house arrest; all Eastern Catholic bishops of Romania and Ukraine[80] are arrested and their dioceses are suppressed; on June 26, 1949 the Bishop of Iasi, Anton Durcovici[81], is arrested (imprisoned in Bucharest,

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[74] Emil Diac, *Papa Pius al XII-lea, apărător al drepturilor omului*.

[75] Gábor Harmai, "Catolicii maghiari şi fidelitatea față de valorile spirituale în timpul regimului comunist", *Dialog Teologic*, no. 24, Iaşi 2009, 127.

[76] Juraj Batelja, "Fericitul Alojzije Stepinac, martir al unității Bisericii", *Dialog Teologic*, no. 24, Iaşi 2009, 104.

[77] Angel Kosmac, "Il Cardinale Štepinac, un testimone vilipeso", *La Nuova Europa* – International cultural magazine, no. 3/1999, apud "Cardinalul Štepinac, un martor disprețuit", in the *„Presa Bună" Almanack*, Iaşi 2001, 53-70.

[78] Želimir Puljić, "Alois Card. Stepinac...", 43.

[79] Stanislav Balik, "Biserica Catolică din Cehia în timpul comunismului", *Dialog Teologic*, no. 24, Iaşi 2009, 113.

[80] Iosif Svidnitskyi, "Mărturia Bisericii Catolice din Ucraina în timpul prigoanei comuniste", *Dialog Teologic*, no. 24, Iaşi 2009, 122.

[81] Anton Coşa, „«Athletae memoriae». Însemnări genealogice, biografice şi istorice", *Arhiva Genealogică*, VII(XII), 1-4, "Sever Zotta" Romanian Institute of Genealogy and Heraldry, Iaşi 2000, 225-228.

Jilava and then Sighet, where during the night of December 10 to 11, 1951 passes away in the "death cell"[82]).

At the diplomatic level, the representatives of communist states unilaterally denounce the *Concordats* previously concluded between the Holy See and countries of Central and Eastern Europe: Lithuania, Latvia, Romania, Yugoslavia, Poland, Austria and Czechoslovakia.

It is quite obvious that the presence of diplomats with the rank of ambassador at the forefront of diplomatic offices of the Holy See in the Central and Eastern Europe had a symbolic value and a practical one as well that the Soviets no longer accepted[83].

During the early years of the *Cold War*[84], Pope Pius XII remains important for Romanians as well, especially for his encouraging apostolic letter "*Veritatem facientes*"[85] of March 27, 1952. By this letter, the Sovereign Pontiff took action against the persecution of the Catholic Church in Romania, mentioning the sufferings of Catholics bishops, priests and faithful in this space, defending their freedom of expression and exercise of religion. The approach of Pope Pius XII is especially worth recalling as, during those years, prisons in Romania and other countries in the communist bloc were already filled with many Catholics, both lay people, priests and bishops.

The death of Joseph Visarionovici Stalin, which occurred on the 5th day[86] of March[87] in 1953, ends the initial phase of the *Cold War*, with "a certain ideological relaxation"[88] being felt in the communist bloc. However, the destalinization[89] did not lead to any relaxation neither in the relations between the West and the post-Stalinist regime in Moscow, nor in the relations between the state and the Catholic Church in the communist countries.

Western allies did nothing to support anti-communist protests in Poland (where on September 25, 1953 Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński was arrested[90]) and Hungary or to prevent any the Soviet intervention in Hungary in the

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[82] Florian MÜLLER, *Viața Episcopului de Iaşi, Dr. Anton Durcovici, Martir*, Presa Bună, Iaşi 1993, 42-43.

[83] Ioan Marius BUCUR, "Relațiile României cu Sf. Scaun la începutul Războiului Rece", 8.

[84] André GLUCKSMANN, *Bucătăreasa şi mâncătorul de oameni*, 32.

[85] PIUS XII, *Veritatem facientes*, March 27, 1952, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Rome, passim.

[86] Vasili GROSSMAN, *Panta Rhei*, Humanitas, Bucharest 1990, 32.

[87] Zbigniew BRZEZINSKI, *Europa Centrală şi de Est în Ciclonul Tranziției*, 216.

[88] Wilhelm DANCĂ, *"«Nu sunt de acord». Biserica şi Statul la Mons. Anton Durcovici"*, 74.

[89] R. AUBERT – J. HAJJAR – J. BRULS – S. TRAMONTIN, *Nuova storia della Chiesa*, tome 5, part II, *La Chiesa nel mondo moderno*, Marietti, Turin 1979, 442.

[90] Tadeusz ROSTWOROSWKI, "De la Wyszyński la Ioan Paul al II-lea, Drumul spre libertate. Primatul cardinal Ştefan Wyszyński", *Dialog Teologic*, no. 24, Iaşi 2009, 92.

autumn of 1956 (following the popular uprising against the communist regime), having "other priorities"[91].

The Holy See was the only one to make its voice heard during those moments, within the limits set by international law. Thus, on October 28, 1956, Pope Pius XII publishes the *Luctuosissimi Eventus* encyclical letter[92], strongly condemning the Soviet invasion of Hungary. Among other things, this important pontifical document reads: "Our paternal heart is deeply moved by the sorrowful events which have befallen the people of eastern Europe and especially of Our beloved Hungary, which is now being soaked in blood by a shocking massacre. And not only is Our heart moved, but so too are the hearts of all men who cherish the rights of civil society, the dignity of man, and the liberty which is due to individuals and to nations"[93].

The Sovereign Pontiff is back with new standpoints on November 1, 1956 (*Laetamur admodum* encyclical letter[94]) and on November 5, 1956 (the *Datis nuperrime* encyclical letter[95]) condemning every time the Soviet military intervention and praying for peace. He also speaks about these events during his radio message on November 10, 1956 dedicated to the "present uncertainties"[96] and during his Christmas radio message of the same year, also mentioning the lack of reaction of Western countries (to this brutal incident) that put "economic interest above human life and moral values"[97].

Although repressive actions do not cease in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, communist authorities wanting to squash any liberal movement born within the Church circles, however, during the time following Stalin's death, one can notice[98] a slight "taming of the persecution against Catholics within the power sphere of Communism"[99].

The pontificate of Pope John XXIII[100] (1958-1963) marked the beginning of a *thaw* in the Holy See's relations[101] with the communist world. In fact, this new state of affairs appeared in a context when (at the diplomatic

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[91] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Europa Centrală şi de Est în Ciclonul Tranziției*, 220.

[92] Jean Chélini, *Histoire de l'église du Christ. L'Église sous Pie XII*, 446.

[93] Jean Chélini, *Histoire de l'église du Christ. L'Église sous Pie XII*, 452.

[94] *Laetamur admodum* Encyclical Letter, available at http://www.vatican.va.

[95] *Datis nuperrime* Encyclical Letter, available at http://www.vatican.va.

[96] Emil Diac, *Papa Pius al XII-lea, apărător al drepturilor omului*, 29.

[97] Emil Diac, *Papa Pius al XII-lea, apărător al drepturilor omului*, 29..

[98] Giovanni Barberini, *L'Ostpolitik della Santa Sede – Un dialogo lungo e faticoso*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2007, 58.

[99] August Franzen – Remigius Bäumer, *Istoria papilor*, 429.

[100] August Franzen – Remigius Bäumer, *Istoria papilor*, 431-441.

[101] Marcel Merle, *Le Saint-Siège dans les relations Est-Ouest*, in *Le Saint-Siège dans les relations internationales*, sous la direction de Joël-Benoît D'Onorio, Éditions du Cerf, Paris 1989. 108.

level) between Eastern and Western powers a so-called *peaceful coexistence*[102] or *detente*[103] was manifesting as well (upon initiative of the Soviet Union[104]), with important consequences for the communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

The works of the Second Vatican Council will be opened at the initiative of Pope John XXIII (October 11, 1962). After just a few days following the solemn opening, mankind was on the verge of a nuclear war due to the crisis caused by the placement of Soviet missiles in Cuba[105]. The Sovereign Pontiff then had a series of initiatives[106] that have eased the situation and the positive solution of the dispute between the US and USSR enhanced the prestige of the Holy See in the international arena.

The Sovereign Pontiff skilfully exploited the major ecclesial event, which was the Second Vatican Council, to enhance dialogue with the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, raising the issue of the participation of Catholic Bishops from communist countries in the works and the presence of "observers" from Orthodox Churches. Both goals were initially successfully completed (an exception being the Romanian Orthodox Church that refused[107] to send observers to the Council), the negotiations also leading to the release (on February 9, 1963) of the hierarch of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Metropolitan Josef Slipyj (deported to Siberia), who will afterwards live in Rome.

Among the initiatives of Pope John XXIII, we mention the *Pacem in terris* encyclical letter[108] of April 11, 1963[109], which speaks of peace between

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[102] Nikita S. Khrouchtchev, "Ce que je pense de la coexistence pacifique", *Études soviétiques*, no. 139, Paris 1959, 1-16.

[103] François Perroux, *La coexistence pacifique*, 3 tomes, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1958; E. Van Bogaert, *Coexistence et droit international*, Pédone, Paris 1959; E. McWhinney, "Le concept soviétique de «coexistence pacifique» et les rapports juridiques entre l'URSS et les États occidentaux", in „Revue Générale de Droit International Public" an. 67, no. 3, July-September, Paris, 1963, p. 545-562.

[104] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Europa Centrală şi de Est în Ciclonul Tranziției*, 224.

[105] Alvar de La Llosa, "Révolution et Église à Cuba: le point de vue de la diplomatie française (1960-1964)", Caravelle. Cahiers du monde hispanique et luso-brésilien, no. 89, Toulouse 2007, 224.

[106] Norman Cousins, "An Asterisk to History: Some Footnotes on the Relationship of John F. Kennedy, Pope John XXIII, and Nikita Khrushchev", in Idem *The Improbable Triumvirate: John F. Kennedy, Pope John, Nikita Khrushchev. An Asterisk to the History of a Hopeful Year, 1962-1963*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York 1972, 7-149.

[107] Ioan Rămureanu, "Ce este şi ce urmăreşte aşa zisul Sinod ecumenic proiectat de Papa Ioan al XXIII-lea", *Ortodoxia*, year XIV, no. 3, July-September, Bucharest 1962, 353-383.

[108] Jean XXIII, *Pacem in terris. La Paix entre les nation, fondée sur la vérité, la justice, la charité, la liberté*, Encyclique du 11 avril 1963, Editions du Centurion, Paris 1963.

[109] Pierre Pierrard, *Histoire de L'Église Catholique*, 287.

peoples, of truth, justice, love and freedom[110]. For the Sovereign Pontiff, "the foundation of peace is truth, and it must be brought into effect by justice. It needs to be animated and perfected by men's love for one another, and, while preserving freedom intact"[111]. The pontifical document is addressed to "all men of good will"[112], repeating the warning of Pope Pius XII back in 1939, "Nothing is lost with peace, everything may be lost with war"[113].

Pope John XXIII considered the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*[114] as "an act of utmost importance"[115], adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of December 10, 1948. The Sovereign Pontiff also took action about the problem of coexistence saying:

> A situation might appear where making contact and meeting on practical problems, which in the past would have seemed meaningless, could be truly fruitful today or tomorrow. The decision in what way and to what extent a fruitful collaboration is to be sought at the social, economic, cultural and political level only depends on the wisdom of those concerned[116].

Although his initiatives regarding openness to communist regimes are remarkable, he did not remain silent "on the issue of the persecution of Church"[117] but, on the first day of his pontificate, he stood by the fate of Catholics in communist bloc countries.

Pope John XXIII remains known as the originator of the Vatican *Ostpolitik*, of that "martyrdom of patience"[118] (as Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, the main protagonist and the strategist of this complex endeavour, suggestively called it), characterized by a "long and tedious dialogue"[119] between the Holy See and the communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which will last nearly three decades (until the collapse of communist regimes in the late 90s of the twentieth century).

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[110] August Franzen – Remigius Bäumer, *Istoria papilor*, 438.

[111] Pierre Pierrard, *Histoire de L'Église Catholique*, 287.

[112] August Franzen – Remigius Bäumer, *Istoria papilor*, 438.

[113] August Franzen – Remigius Bäumer, *Istoria papilor*, 438.

[114] Cf. *Principalele instrumente internaționale privind drepturile omului la care România este parte*, tome I, *Instrumente universale*, Romanian Institute for Human Rights, Bucharest 2002, 5-11.

[115] August Franzen – Remigius Bäumer, *Istoria papilor*, 438.

[116] August Franzen – Remigius Bäumer, *Istoria papilor*, 439.

[117] August Franzen – Remigius Bäumer, *Istoria papilor*, 439.

[118] Agostino Casaroli, *Il martirio della pazienza. La Santa Sede e i Paesi comunisti (1963-1989)*, Edizioni Einaudi, Torino 2000, 335.

[119] Giovanni Barberini, *Chiesa e Santa Sede nell'ordinamento internazionale. Esame delle norme canoniche*, 2007.

The efforts of Pope John XXIII will be continued by Pope Paul VI (1963-1978) who, on September 29, 1963, in his speech delivered at the opening of the Second Session of the Second Vatican Council[120] recalled, "the Churches persecuted in the East"[121] where "the situation has not changed decisively"[122]. Moreover, the fact that some bishops from Communist countries who participated in the first session of the Council had not been granted authorization to travel to take part in the second session was considered even a worsening of the existing situation. The attitude of Pope Paul VI was quite prompt, asking this suggestive question: "Where are our brothers from the countries where the Church has been declared war and how is religion seen there?"[123].

The *Second Vatican Council* reaffirmed the universal vocation of the Church[124] (insisting on the mission of the Church in the world[125]), the fact that the Church is in the service of man[126], being a balance in the contemporary world[127]. The impact of the Second Vatican Council on the dialogue[128] with the communist regimes was a particular one ultimately.

Moreover, two of the conciliar documents (the Pastoral Constitution On the Church In the Modern World – *Gaudinum et Spes*[129] and the Declaration on Religious Liberty – *Dignitatis Humanae*[130]), issued on December 7, 1965 addressed a vulnerability of communism, namely the wrong conception of man or the "anthropological error"[131].

Moreover, the two important conciliar documents referred to above, will be the fundament of the Holy See's position in the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Helsinki. At this conference (opened on July 3, 1973 and closed on August 1, 1975), the

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[120] The Second Vatican Council took place between October 11, 1962 – December 8, 1965, in four sessions: I (October, 11, 1962-December 8, 1962), II (September 29, 1963-December 4, 1963); III (September 14-November 21, 1964), IV (September 14, 1965-December 8, 1965).

[121] August Franzen – Remigius Bäumer, *Istoria papilor*, 444.

[122] August Franzen – Remigius Bäumer, *Istoria papilor*, 444.

[123] August Franzen – Remigius Bäumer, *Istoria papilor*, 444.

[124] *Vaticano II. Costituzioni, decreti e dichiarazioni del Concilio*, Edizioni Cinque Lune, Roma 1966, 111.

[125] *Vaticano II. Costituzioni, decreti e dichiarazioni del Concilio*, 222.

[126] *Vaticano II. Costituzioni, decreti e dichiarazioni del Concilio*, 174.

[127] *Vaticano II. Costituzioni, decreti e dichiarazioni del Concilio*, 180.

[128] Ieronim Iacob, „50 de ani de la deschiderea Conciliului Ecumenic Vatican II (11 octombrie 1962). Impactul imediat al Conciliului asupra vieții politice şi religioase din România", *Pro Memoria* (ecclesiastical history magazine of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Bucharest), no. 5, Bucharest 2006, passim.

[129] The Pastoral Constitution *Gaudinum et Spes*, available at http://www.magisteriu.ro.

[130] The Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*, available at http://www.magisteriu.ro.

[131] Agostino Casaroli, *Il martirio della pazienza*..., 40.

pontifical diplomacy has achieved a remarkable success, succeeding (in the preparatory consultations in November 1972 and June 1973) to introduce *freedom of conscience* and *religious liberty* (in the context of observing the human rights) among the topics for debate, which will later lead to the inclusion in the final document drawn up on August 1, 1975 (signed by Pope Paul VI and Archbishop Agostino Casaroli for the Holy See) on the recognition of international conventions on human rights (including here both religious liberty and freedom of conscience), thus providing[132] a new legal basis for contesting communist regimes.

On the other side, a certain change in attitude and of the Soviet government in Moscow towards the Catholic Church had already become visible, as evidenced by the telegram of congratulations[133] that Nikita Khrushchev had sent to Pope John XXIII on occasion of his 80th anniversary, in November 1961. This gesture, surprising to many, had been however anticipated by the public appreciation of the Soviet leader for the Sovereign Pontiff's efforts for peace, during an interview in early September, to the "Pravda" newspaper[134].

This transformation continued with the visit of Alexei Adjubei (Khrushchev's son-in-law[135]) to Pope John XXIII in March 1963[136], of the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko[137], to Pope Paul VI in April 1966, through the audience granted to the head of the Soviet state Podgorny[138] on January 30, 1967, by the welcoming of the Foreign Minister Gromyko by Paul VI on November 12, 1970 etc. On these occasions the situation of the Church in the Soviet Union and Eastern bloc countries has also been addressed.

This apparent "relaxation" in communist Moscow's attitude to the Catholic Church was not a unitary one in all countries of Central and Eastern Europe under the Soviet umbrella. While in Poland, under the pontificate of Paul VI, the situation of the Catholic Church had improved somewhat, a visible sign of it being the lifting of the ban on leaving the country for the primate of Poland, Cardinal Wyszynski, who in 1968 will even receive authorization to travel to Rome, in Czechoslovakia instead, there was a tightening of persecution of the Church.

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[132] Achille SILVESTRINI, "La Santa Sede nella ostpolitik e nella C.S.C.E.", in *La politica internazionale della Santa Sede. 1965-1990*, edited by Giovanni BARBERINI, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, Napoli 1992, 52.

[133] Agostino CASAROLI, *Il martirio della pazienza...*, 17-22.

[134] Cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, year CI, Vatican City, Wednseday, September 6, 1961, 1.

[135] John KOEHLER, *Spioni la Vatican. Războiul Rece purtat de Uniunea Sovietică împotriva Bisericii Catolice*, Litera, Bucharest 2012, 16.

[136] Agostino CASAROLI, *Il martirio della pazienza...*, 26.

[137] Francesco GLIGORA – Biagia CATANZARO, *Breve storia dei papi da S. Pietro a Giovanni Paolo II*, 264.

[138] Francesco GLIGORA – Biagia CATANZARO, *Breve storia dei papi da S. Pietro a Giovanni Paolo II*, 264.

The events of *the Prague Spring*[139] of 1968 and the Red Army entering the capital of Czechoslovakia will unveil, once again, the real picture of the Soviet repression in the communist camp. Only in October 1970 talks between Prague and Rome will be resumed, and at the end of February 1973, as a result of difficult negotiations, four new bishops could be appointed in Czechoslovakia, given that until then this country only had a diocesan bishop and an apostolic administrator, the other 12 dioceses being administered by vicars capitulars. Likewise in Albania, the persecution of the Church continued after the Second World War, with almost half of the Catholic priests being killed.

During the pontificate of Paul VI[140] (1963-1978), the talks (started more than ten years before) could be resumed between the Holy See and Hungary, on September 15, 1964 and an agreement[141] on the appointment of six[142] new bishops[143] (a significant success of Vatican diplomacy) was even signed; later on, in 1972, four new bishops were appointed. This relative "relaxation" (however still marked by a lack of freedom of the Catholic Church in Hungary and the guardianship of the State) was possible with the "sacrifice" of Cardinal József Mindszenty.

This tall Hungarian Catholic hierarch, sent to prison by the communist authorities at the end of 1948, released during the Hungarian Revolution started in October 1956, will have to flee (because of the Soviet invasion) on November 4, 1956 to the American Embassy in Budapest, which he will leave 15 years later (September 29, 1971), being forced into another exile (imposed by the new conditions of the *Ostpolitik* of that time, setting out the relations between the Holy See and the communist countries within the Soviet Union's sphere of influence, but also the US interests in the area), settling in Vienna. Although he had been forced into an attitude of discretion, being obliged not to share information from his personal experience with the communist regime, which could harm relations between the Vatican and communist Hungary, however the moral verticality of this prelate could not be defeated and with the slogan "I can not and I do not want to be silent anymore", he published his memoirs in 1974[144] (risking suspension from the dignity of Archbishop of Esztergom).

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[139] Guy Hermet, *Istoria națiunilor şi a naționalismului în Europa*, 254.

[140] August Franzen – Remigius Bäumer, *Istoria papilor*, 441-453.

[141] Cf. *Pro Acțiunea Catolică Română*, year XIV, no. 150, Rome 1969, 4.

[142] *Pro Acțiunea Catolică Română*, 4.

[143] The six bishops are the first Roman Catholic bishops appointed by the Holy See in the period following the instauration of the communist regime in Hungary.

[144] Jozsef Mindszenty, *Memoirs*, Macmillan Publishing, New York 1974.

A relaxation in the bilateral relations also occurred between the Holy See and Yugoslavia since 1956, leading in August 1970 to the resuming of diplomatic relations[145], translated into an exchange of diplomatic representatives. For the first time full diplomatic contacts were made between a state ruled by communists and the Holy See, Yugoslavia becoming the first communist country in Eastern Europe with an ambassador accredited to the Holy See[146]. Subsequently, on March 29, 1971, Pope Paul VI received the visit of Josip Broz Tito (Yugoslavian President[147]).

Related to the diplomatic approaches mentioned above, very interesting was the fact that many commentators of that time considered the decision of the pontifical diplomacy as "the paradigm of the future relations between the Vatican and other socialist countries"[148]. In this sense, not a few voices claimed that Mons. Mario Cagna's functions, appointed pro-nuncio in Belgrade "will not be limited to the pure representation of the Vatican in Yugoslavia, but will expand, establishing and maintaining contacts with all communist countries of Eastern Europe[149]". Comments, "generally rather cautious[150]", were however limited to applauding "this beginning of thaw intended to lead to a gradual normalization of the situation of the Catholic Church in communist countries and to engage the Vatican into an action of enhancing collaborations around the world, closed until recently, in favour of peace"[151].

The new Eastern policy of the Holy See also included the appointment of the Episcopal Commissioners in the G.D.R. as apostolic administrators on July 23, 1973. The judgement notification was sent by the Apostolic Nuncio to the dioceses in West German concerned by this decision, meaning that the territories of these apostolic administrations belonged to the Federal German episcopal sees. The appointment of an apostolic administrator meant that he would exercise his office with an immediate mandate from the Holy See. With this measure, the Apostolic See considered the changed political relations between the F.R.G. and the R.D.G. Of course this was not a final settlement.

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[145] Cf. "Raporturi diplomatice oficiale între Sfântul Scaun şi Republica Federală Socialistă Iugoslavia", *Pro Acțiunea Catolică Română*, year XV, no. 165, Rome 1970, 1.

[146] "Raporturi diplomatice oficiale între Sfântul Scaun şi Republica Federală Socialistă Iugoslavia", 1.

[147] Francesco GLIGORA – Biagia CATANZARO, *Breve storia dei papi da S. Pietro a Giovanni Paolo II*, 264.

[148] Cf. *supra*, footnote no. 145.

[149] *Ibidem*.

[150] *Ibidem*.

[151] *Ibidem*.

The relations between the Holy See and Romania, after the great communist persecutions (during 1948-1964[152]) of the Roman Catholic Church in Romania, will reach (after 1964[153]) a so-called "limited relaxation"[154], marked by a series of bilateral negotiations.

Among the diplomatic contacts of the time, between the communist authorities in Romania and the emissaries of the Holy See, we mention the following: the official colloquium of December 21, 1967 between the Romanian ambassador Cornel Burtică and Mons. Agostino Casaroli, followed by another meeting on May 10, 1968[155]; the visit to the Pope Paul VI of the President of the Council of Ministers of the S.R.R., Ioan Gheorghe Maurer, and of the Foreign Minister, Corneliu Manescu, who were in Rome[156], on January 24, 1968; the visit (started on October 29, 1968) of Mons. Giovanni Cheli (advisor in the Dicastery for Foreign Affairs[157]) to Romania accompanied by Fr. Professor Petru Tocănel[158], PhD (professor at the Pontifical Lateran University, consultor in the Congregation for Oriental Churches); the talks of January 1975 between the archbishop Luiggi Poggi[159] (in charge of the relations between the Holy See and the communist states in Eastern Europe) and the Rev. John Bukovsky (diplomat, future archbishop and the first nuncio in Romania after the fall of communism in 1989 and the resuming of the diplomatic relations between Romania and the Holy See in 1990), on the one hand, and the directors of the Religious Affairs Department (who had a mandate to address the issue of regulating

[152] Dănuț Doboș – Sebastian Doboș, "Biserica Romano-Catolică din România în anii regimului comunist (1948-1989)", 178-200.

[153] In 1964, the communist regime ended officially its oppressive policy of persecution of the Catholic Church in Romania. However, the "abuses continued in various forms until 1989" (Dănuț Doboș – Sebastian Doboș, "Biserica Romano-Catolică din România în anii regimului comunist (1948-1989)", 201).

[154] Ovidiu Bozgan, *România versus Vatican. Persecuția Bisericii Catolice din România comunistă în lumina documentelor diplomatice franceze*, Sylvi, Bucharest 2000, 88-105.

[155] Ovidiu Bozgan, *Cronica unui eşec previzibil. România şi Sfântul Scaunn în epoca pontificatului lui Paul al VI-lea (1963-1978)*, Curtea Veche, Bucharest 2004, 247-248.

[156] Ieronim Iacob, „50 de ani de la deschiderea Conciliului Ecumenic Vatican II...”., passim.

[157] Ieronim Iacob, „50 de ani de la deschiderea Conciliului Ecumenic Vatican II...”., passim.

[158] Anton Coşa, "Genealogii eclesiastice catolice în Moldova", *Acta Bacoviensia*, VI, Bacău 2011, 200-204.

[159] His Excellency Ioan Robu, Metropolitan Archbishop of Bucharest, said at the news of Cardinal Luigi Poggi's passing away: *"During the communist years, he was already working for a normalization of the situation of the Catholic Church of both rites in our country. He loved Romania and our Church here, and in order to help us, he often faced the disdain of the authorities of the time and continued to defend the rights of the Church in a time when no one dared to use this expression in our country:* ***the rights of the Church****"* (Cf. Press Release – The Catholic Bishops' Conference in Romania, *A trecut la cele veşnice Cardinalul Luigi Poggi. Nunțiu itinerant în țările din Estul Europei în perioada comunistă,* Bucharest, May 4, 2010, available at http://www.arcb.ro.

the legal situation of the Catholic Church in Romania and the resuming of the relations between the Romanian state and the Vatican[160]).

On May 26, 1973 talks will be held at the highest level between the Holy See and Romania, occasioned by the visit[161] of the Head of State, Nicolae Ceausescu, to Pope Paul VI, during which the situation of Catholicism in Romania will be widely discussed.

The diplomatic negotiations between the Holy See and Romania will be constantly marked by the issue of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Romania (appointed by the Sovereign Pontiff and canonically invested). In this regard, according to Article 22 of the new *Law on Religious Affairs*[162], published by the communist government on August 4, 1948[163], the Latin-rite Catholic dioceses in Romania had been reduced to two: the Diocese of Iasi and the Diocese of Alba-Iulia. The Catholic Archdiocese of Bucharest was incorporated in the Diocese of Iaşi, while the ones in Timişoara, Oradea and Satu-Mare were part of the Diocese of Alba-Iulia. This created a quite confusing situation. Although, canonically, each diocese kept their canonical jurisdiction, from an administrative-political point of view, as of June 1951, the Diocese of Iasi was represented before the state authorities by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Bucharest (Mons. Petru Pleşca receiving the title of "Pro-Vicar General"[164]), a situation will continue until 1989.

On December 16, 1965[165], Petru Pleşca is consecrated as titular bishop of Voli[166] *in partibus* (from March 11, 1951 he was managing the Diocese of Iasi as *ordinarius substitutus*[167] while being, as mentioned above, Pro-Vicar

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[160] Ovidiu Bozgan, "Tergiversări, concesii şi imobilism. Problema restabilirii ierarhiei romano-catolice în contextul relațiilor româno-vaticane (1978-1984)", *Analele Universității Bucureşti*, Istorie, year L, Bucharest 2001, 98.

[161] National Archives of Romania, Fond *Comitetul Central al Partidului Comunist Român. Secția Relații Externe – Vizite interne şi externe*, inventar (1971-1989), page 14, file *Republica italiană*, no. 4/1973, available at http://www.arhivelenationale.ro.

[162] On August 4,1948 the Decree no. 177 on the general regime of Religions was published („Monitorul Oficial", part I, no. 178 of August 4, 1948, passim).

[163] Ioan Scurtu, *Istoria românilor de la Carol I la Nicolae Ceauşescu*, Mica Valahie, Bucharest 2010, 120.

[164] Ştefan Lupu, *Mons. Petru Gherghel, în inima diecezei: profesor, rector, ordinarius şi episcop*, available at http://www.ercis.ro.

[165] Iosif Gabor – Iosif Simon, *Necrolog (1600-2000)*, Presa Bună, Iaşi 2001, 77.

[166] Iosif Gabor – Iosif Simon, *Necrolog (1600-2000)*, 77.

[167] The *ordinarius substitutus* function was introduced in all Roman Catholic dioceses in Romania at the onset of the persecution of the Catholic Church by the communist regime, when all diocesan bishops were arrested and taken to jail. According to the dispositions of the Holy See, during those times of persecution, every bishop had to appoint two priests who, as *ordinarius substitutus* and in the established order, would succeed him in leading the diocese, to ensure continuity of the canonical jurisdiction. Thus, after the arrest of Bishop Anton Durcovici, canonical jurisdiction in the Diocese of Iasi was held by His Excel-

General of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Bucharest) and Jakab Antal is consecrated as titular bishop of Astigitana and auxiliary bishop of Alba Iulia, on February 13, 1972[168].

After the death of His Excellency Petru Pleşca (March 19, 1977), Fr. Andrei Ghergut[169] took over the administration of the Diocese of Iasi, as *ordinarius substitutus*. Fr. Gherguţ had been appointed by His Excellency Plesca, but was not accepted by the communist authorities. Emissaries of the Holy See, Archbishop Luigi Poggi and Mons. John Bukovsky, consulting local clergy, proposed Fr. Petru Gherghel (rector of the Catholic Seminary in Iasi) to the state authorities who accepted him.

On February 21, 1978, Pope Paul VI, by decree no. 123 of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, appointed Fr. Petru Gherghel, aged only 38 years, at the helm of the diocese of Iasi, as *ordinarius ad nutum Sanctae Sedis cum munere administratoris apostolici*[170]. The handing over ceremony was held on April 3, 1978 in the chapel of the Archbishop's palace in Bucharest, in the presence of the Holy See delegation and a small group of priests, Monsignor Petru Gherghel taking canonical possession of his diocese of Iasi as *ordinarius*[171] on April 4, 1978 during a solemn Holy Mass.

The appointment of Fr. Petru Gherghel as *ordinarius ad nutum Sanctae Sedis cum munere administratoris apostolici*, not as *ordinarius substitutus* represented a first step towards the normalization of the ecclesial situation for the Diocese of Iasi, because since the arrest of the titular Bishop Anton Durcovici[172] (June 26, 1949), it had only been led by *ordinarii substituti*. Therefore, the appointment of Fr. Petru Gherghel as Pro-Vicar of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Bucharest (accepted by state authorities[173]) and his appointment by the Sovereign Pontiff as *ordinarius ad nutum Sanctae Sedis*, with canonical jurisdiction and directly subordinated to the Holy See, was certainly a wise choice and a diplomatic success of papal emissaries.

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lency Marcu Glaser, acting as Vicar General and, following the arrest of Bishop Durcovici, by the *ordinarius substitutus*. Bishop Glaser has appointed as *ordinarius substitutus* Fr. Gheorghe Pet and Fr. Wilhelm Clofanda. Fr. Gheorghe Pet has appointed as *ordinarius substitutus* Fr. Wilhelm Clofanda and Fr. Petru Pleşca (Ştefan LUPU, *Mons. Petru Gherghel, în inima diecezei: profesor, rector, ordinarius şi episcop*).

168 Ovidiu BOZGAN, "Tergiversări, concesii şi imobilism...", 97.

169 Iosif GABOR – Iosif Simon, *Necrolog (1600-2000)*, 38.

170 Ştefan LUPU, *Mons. Petru Gherghel, în inima diecezei: profesor, rector, ordinarius şi episcop*.

171 Ştefan LUPU, *Mons. Petru Gherghel, în inima diecezei: profesor, rector, ordinarius şi episcop*.

172 Anton COŞA, „«Athletae memoriae». Însemnări genealogice, biografice şi istorice", 225-228.

173 Ştefan LUPU, *Mons. Petru Gherghel, în inima diecezei: profesor, rector, ordinarius şi episcop*.

Thirty years had passed since the Romanian communist government led by Dr. Petru Groza unilaterally denounced (on July 17, 1948[174]) the Concordat[175] which had been concluded between the Holy See and Romania on May 10, 1927[176] (ratified by the Romanian Senate on May 25, 1929, by the Chamber of Deputies on May 29, 1929, by the Romanian government led by Iuliu Maniu on June 12, 1929[177], the minute of the ratification being signed in Rome between the Holy See and Romania, on July 7, 1929[178]).

Generally, diplomatic initiatives undertaken by the Holy See were marked by a long series of extremely difficult negotiations with communist regimes, designed to obtain at least minimum freedoms[179] for peoples under communist regimes in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

Pontifical diplomacy approached both international policy issues specific to the existing context (peace, disarmament, peaceful coexistence etc.) and specific topics regarding freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, the recovery of an adequate space[180] for the mission of the Catholic Churches in communist countries in Central Europe and Eastern Europe. In the latter case, the objectives focused mainly on the recognition of the Pope's authority over the Catholics in those countries, the restoring of the hierarchy within local churches and thus the possibility of communication between bishops and the Holy See[181]. Naturally, the above-mentioned objectives varied according to each country[182].

To achieve its goals, the Holy See has developed[183], besides the *diplomatic* actions (represented by Cardinal Agostino Casaroli), a *pastoral* element (represented by Cardinal Franz König), for closeness and solidarity with the Churches in the East (the association *Pro Oriente* was created in order to support this initiative).

All these bold undertakings of diplomatic nature must be correlated with the geopolitical situation on the continent during those years, with

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[174] Ioan SCURTU, *Istoria românilor de la Carol I la Nicolae Ceaușescu*, 120.

[175] I. DUMITRIU-SNAGOV, *Le Saint-Siège et la Roumanie Moderne. 1866-1914*, tome 57, Editrice Pontificia Universitá Gregoriana, Rome 1989, 197.

[176] I. DUMITRIU-SNAGOV, *România în diplomația Vaticanului. 1939-1944*, Garamond, Bucharest 1991, 31.

[177] Ștefan LUPU, *Mons. Petru Gherghel, în inima diecezei: profesor, rector, ordinarius și episcop*.

[178] AMBASCIATA DI ROMANIA PRESSO LA SANTA SEDE, *La Romania e la Santa Sede. Documenti diplomatici*, Vatican City 2000, 12-13, 47-61 and 71.

[179] Carlo FABRIS, "Presenza della diplomazia pontificia", 95.

[180] Cf. *supra*, footnote no. 132, p. 42.

[181] *Ibidem*, p. 43.

[182] See Agostino CASAROLI, *Il martirio della pazienza...*, 77-102 (Hungary), 123-192 (Czechoslovakia), 193-249 (Yugoslavia), 251-320 (Poland), 321-329 (Bulgaria).

[183] Giovanni BARBERINI, "L'avvio dell'Ostpolitik vaticana", în *Il filo sottile. L'Ostpolitik vaticana di Agostino Casaroli*, edited by Alberto MELLONI, , Il Mulino, Bologna 2006, 92- 105.

the evolution of the "Cold War" that "meant the confrontation between two opposing political and organizational systems"[184] (capitalist and socialist, respectively), with the Soviet policy towards socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe and military interventions[185] in Budapest (1956) and Prague (1968), with the assertion of the "Eurocommunism"[186] in the European West (promoted by the communist parties in Italy, France and Spain), with the availability of the European allies of America "to separately negotiate truces"[187] with the Soviet Union, with the launch of the "Ostpolitik"[188] (both at the secular[189] and ecclesiastical level[190]) etc.

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[184] Zbigniew BRZEZINSKI, *Europa Centrală şi de Est în Ciclonul Tranziţiei*, 27.

[185] Alexandr JAKOVLEV, *Ce vrem să facem din Uniunea Sovietică*, 130.

[186] *Eurocommunism* is a concept launched initially by Enrico Berlinguer, the Italian Communist Party leader, after the term had become famous with the publishing of the book "Eurocommunism and State", by Santiago Carrillo, General Secretary of the Spanish Communist Party. Essentially, the Eurocommunist vision was close to Nicholas Ceauşescu's allegations about "the right of every Communist Party to establish, by itself, its fate without any external interference". Eurocommunism promoters expressed support "for the plurality of political parties, for the right to existence and activity of opposition parties and democratic alternation between the majority and minority", claiming "a continuous democratization of economic, social and political life", the securing and development of "existing bourgeois freedoms" applied to the "freedom of thought and expression, press, assemblies and associations, demonstrations, free movement of persons within the country and abroad, inviolability of private life, freedom of religion", pleading for a "full freedom of expression of philosophical and cultural trends, and artistic opinion". In a regional context, beyond the national one, eurocommunists pledged to promote "the joint action of the communist and socialist parties, of all democratic and progressive forces of all [Western] Europe". In 1976, a Conference of European Communist parties was organized in East Berlin. Kevin DEVLIN, "Communism in Europe. The challenge of Eurocommunism", *Problems of Communism*, tome XXVI, no. 1 (January-February), Washington D.C. 1977, 1-20; IDEM, "Eurocommunism: Between East and West", *International Security*, tome 3, no. 4, Cambridge MA 1979, 81-107.

[187] Zbigniew BRZEZINSKI, *Europa Centrală şi de Est în Ciclonul Tranziţiei*, 224.

[188] The Vatican's *Ostpolitik* strategist was Cardinal Agostino Casaroli. He is considered as the architect of Vatican foreign policy regarding the *communist bloc* under Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI. As a diplomat, he played a leading role in the relations of the Holy See with the communist countries behind the *Iron Curtain*. See: Agostino CASAROLI, *Il martirio della pazienza...*, 335.

[189] From the secular point of view, "the policy regarding Eastern Europe" was an orientation launched by the Federal Germany Chancellor, Willy Brandt, focusing on the normalization of relations between Federal Germany and some communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, such as the German Democratic Republic, the Polish People's Republic, Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, U.S.S.R., aimed at promoting political and economic interests of the F.R.G. (Zbigniew BRZEZINSKI, *Europa Centrală şi de Est în Ciclonul Tranziţiei*, 225).

[190] At the ecclesiastical level, "the policy regarding Eastern Europe" was an orientation launched by Pope John XXIII, preceeding the secular initiative, with specific targets for improving the situation of Catholic Churches in the communist states of Central and Eastern Europe (Giovanni BARBERINI, *L'Ostpolitik della Santa Sede – Un dialogo lungo e faticoso*;

The pontifical diplomacy has acted in an extremely complicated geopolitical context and during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, but building upon previous experiences[191] did not lose contact with the modern world, not even for a single moment.

With the pontificate of Pope John Paul II (1978-2005), the Holy See[192] redefines its concept of *European policy*, the Sovereign Pontiff even promoting a new vision of *Eastern policy*, moving from *peaceful coexistence* to a new approach of relations with the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe. This radical change in the Vatican diplomacy (linked to the communist system crisis) will inevitably lead to the collapse of communist regimes[193] in Central and Eastern Europe, major event at the end of the twentieth century.

The support of Pope John Paul II and the Solidarity trade union were key factors in the fight against communism, threatening not only "the communist regime of the most important European satellite of the Soviet Union"[194] (Poland), but also the communist world in Central and Eastern Europe as a whole. Thus, "Polish crisis spread over the entire decade, progressively undermining not only the Polish communist regime, but gradually contaminating other Eastern European countries"[195], including the Soviet Union (where the coming to power of a new and younger leadership, headed by Mikhail Gorbachev, led to the "perestroika"[196] phenomenon marked by the adoption of "vigorous reforms"[197] with deep consequences both internally and externally).

Pope John Paul II has consistently defended religious freedom. His efforts in this regard were based on the rules of law previously recognized in international law. Moreover, the Sovereign Pontiff was not afraid to make religious freedom one of the leitmotives of his actions, meeting the needs of the contemporary world[198], especially in Central and Eastern Europe marked by the limitations of communism. Religious freedom as international issue and national issue developed starting from the "freedom of conscience"[199]. The preamble of the first meeting of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in

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Anna Carletti, "Il contributo della diplomazia pontificia alla costruzione di una nuova società internazionale").

[191] Alfred Läpple, *Reportage sulla storia della Chiesa*, Edizioni Paoline, Rome 1971, 379.

[192] August Franzen – Remigius Bäumer, *Istoria papilor*, 453-455.

[193] Alexandr Jakovlev, *Ce vrem să facem din Uniunea Sovietică*, 107.

[194] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Europa Centrală şi de Est în Ciclonul Tranziției*, 230.

[195] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Europa Centrală şi de Est în Ciclonul Tranziției*, 230.

[196] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Europa Centrală şi de Est în Ciclonul Tranziției*, 98.

[197] Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Europa Centrală şi de Est în Ciclonul Tranziției*, 231.

[198] Marie Zimmermann, *Structure social et eglise. Doctrines et praxis des rapports eglise-etat du XVIII^{e} siecle a Jean Paul II*, Cerdic Publications, Strasbourg 1981, 145.

[199] Marie Zimmermann, *Structure social et eglise...*, 89.

Amsterdam in 1948[200] noted that "religious freedom is an essential element"[201] of the normal international order. This implies the universality of Christianity, Christians considering the question of freedom of religion as an international problem, wishing for this to be respected everywhere.

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*[202] (proclaimed by the UN on December 10, 1948) also recognized religious freedom as a fundamental human right and human freedom. During the New-Delhi Declaration in 1961, the Ecumenical Council of Churches stated inter alia: "Because all forms of freedom are inextricably connected to each other, religious freedom must be regarded as a characteristic human right that all people must be allowed to exercise. Article 18 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which enshrines freedom of religion is an acceptable basis for a sufficiently broad interpretation"[203].

During his pontificate, Pope John Paul II has undertaken numerous actions in favour of humanity, some with a deep political nuance[204]. The democratization of communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe is his doing largely, his points of view being taken into account during the years preceding the collapse of the totalitarian system[205].

Before 1989, the Sovereign Pontiff emphasized not once the need for freedom, so mocked in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe by the "tragic utopia"[206] of Marxism, raising his native Poland to the rank of model. He constantly insisted on the importance of respecting the fundamental right to the freedom of religion and freedom of conscience, "those essential columns of the structure of human rights and the foundation of every society that is truly free"[207]. Thus, the struggle for spiritual rebirth, freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, created in these countries an environment favourable to the manifestation of anti-communist actions and promotion of democratic values. From Vienna (1983) to Santiago de Compostela (1982[208]

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[200] Marie ZIMMERMANN, *Structure social et eglise...*, 89.

[201] Marie ZIMMERMANN, *Structure social et eglise...*, 105.

[202] Cf. *supra*, footnote no. 115.

[203] Cf. *Conseil oecumenique des Eglises* (Nouvelle Delhi–1961), Delachaux et Niestlé, Neuchâtel 1961, 155-157, apud Marie ZIMMERMANN, *Structure social et eglise...*, 118.

[204] Cf. "Cruciada papală împotriva corupției", *Lumea*, no. 15-16 (1534-1535), Bucharest, May 20-26, 1993, 14-15.

[205] See: "Sfinții şi martirii, adevărată forță a Bisericii. Martirii secolului XX – comemorare ecumenică", *„Presa Bună" Almanack*, Iaşi 2001, 38-39.

[206] Cf. "Europa creştină a lui Ioan Paul al II-lea" (article initially appeared in the French newspaper *Le Monde* of April 24, 1990), *Europa la zi. Buletin*, no. 17, Rompres News Agency, Bucharest, May 17, 1990, 24-26.

[207] Cf. *supra*, footnote no. 34, p. 31.

[208] Violeta BARBU, "Memoria totalitarismului dintr-o perspectivă catolică. O dezbatere istorică",58.

and 1989), from Spira (1987) to Strasbourg (1989), Pope John Paul II never ceased to urge Europe to find its "Christian roots and soul"[209] once more in order to restore unity[210].

The mission[211] of John Paul II was not at all easy. The assassination attempt in Rome on May 13, 1981[212] against him is enough to understand that his efforts were facing serious and numerous obstacles[213]. Charismatic person, of an indisputable moral authority, the Sovereign Pontiff was constant throughout his life in his intransigence towards the *communist totalitarianism*[214], committing firmly at the international relations level, insisting on the human dignity and rights.

During the pontificate of John Paul II, the Roman Catholic Church has shown the world a power that "the world of politics had not revealed for centuries"[215]. Those who look more closely into the unsettled history at the end of the twentieth century cannot overlook the "thinking and persuasion effort aimed at defeating the evil"[216] made by Pope John Paul II. This *pilgrim Pope*, "by the power of faith, has contributed to the collapse of communism, the fall of the *Iron Curtain* and the ending of the *Cold War*"[217].

The content of our study shows with sufficient certainty, we believe, that the *pontifical diplomacy* has crucially contributed, along with the efforts of Catholics, priests and bishops (many of them sacrificing their lives on the altar of the fight for faith and freedom, to defend human dignity and democratic values, thus becoming true martyrs[218]), to the collapse of communist regimes[219] in Central and Eastern European countries through constant and persevering efforts.

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[209] Cf. *supra*, footnote no. 206.

[210] Giovanni BARBERINI, *L'Ostpolitik della Santa Sede – Un dialogo lungo e faticoso*, 387.

[211] John CORNWELL, *Un papa d'inverno. Trionfi e conflitti nel pontificato di Giovanni Paolo II*, Translation from English by Stefania Cherchi, Garzanti Libri, Milan 2000, 95-99, 111-115, 130-137.

[212] Cf. "Vatican. După atentatul asupra Papei Ioan Paul al II-lea", *Lumea*, no. 21 (916), Bucharest, May 21, 1981, 13.

[213] André FROSSARD, *Portrait de Jean-Paul II*, Editions Robert Laffout, Paris 1988, 65.

[214] Stefano MONOLOV, "Martiriul catolicilor din Bulgaria în anii socialismului. Rezistența dificilă", *Dialog Teologic*, no. 24, Iaşi 2009, 87.

[215] Jozef MAKARCZYK, "Ioan Paul al II-lea şi Biserica Catolică din Bielorusia", *Dialog Teologic*, no. 24, Iaşi 2009, 133.

[216] Karol WOJTILA, *Poeme*, Coresi, Bucureşti 1992, 142.

[217] Jozef MAKARCZYK, "Ioan Paul al II-lea şi Biserica Catolică din Bielorusia", 133.

[218] Anton COŞA, "Pământul uitat... de dincolo de Prut. Rezistența catolicilor în timpul persecuției bolşevicilor în actuala Republică Moldova", *Dialog Teologic*, no. 24, Iaşi 2009, 80.

[219] Agostino CASAROLI, *Il martirio della pazienza...*, 335.